Department of Human Resources 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore MD 21201 Control Number: 17-10 Revised Effective Date: UPON RECEIPT Issuance Date: November 30, 2016

TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF

FROM: TRACEY C. PALIATH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: ELDERLY SIMPLIFIED APPLICATION PROJECT (ESAP)

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

Background

The previously issued Action Transmittal #17-10 contained some unclear information on ESAP and we have received numerous questions about the process. We are issuing this revised AT-17-10 with attachments to provide additional guidance to staff. AT 17-10 Revised and the attached information clarify that:

- The Rights and Responsibilities must be signed.
- The application has been revised slightly to require the customer's signature at the end of the Rights and Responsibilities only.
- Customers cannot apply for the Maryland Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (MSNAP). That policy and procedure has not changed.
- Customers must return the Change Form at the end of the 12th month and the and 24th months or their FSP case should be closed with 10 days adverse action. DHR Central will send out the Change Form.

Included with 17-10 Revised is an Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) toolkit including questions and answers that Policy has received. We will post the toolkit on FIPNet and the Q&A on the Google Drive for easy access. As we receive additional information from our federal partners at the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) we will provide updates.

Summary

In an effort to be responsive to the needs of local departments and the customers we serve,

FIA requested and received approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to implement a demonstration project allowing us to waive certain Food Supplement Program (FSP) rules for customers over age 60 who have no earned income.

Anyone with earned income is not eligible for the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP). The primary goal of ESAP is to simplify the application and verification process for eligible seniors. Maryland is the sixth state to implement ESAP.

The project has several key advantages:

- Increased efficiency by using a DHR Central team to process applications filed via myDHR.
- Increased use of electronic verification sources to improve both efficiency and accuracy.
- Reduced verification requirements for customers.
- Elimination of the redetermination interview, saving case managers from scheduling and conducting interviews.
- Extended certification to 36 months for the customers' convenience.

ESAP was implemented statewide effective Tuesday, November 1, 2016.

ACTION REQUIRED

Case manager actions:

A team of staff within FIA's Bureau of Local Operations will process ESAP <u>applications</u> filed through *my*DHR. When a customer or a customer's authorized representative comes to a local department to file an application, encourage them to use *my*DHR to apply for FSP. The logic within *my*DHR will automatically screen the customer for ESAP (at least 60 years old with no earned income), and automatically assign the application to district office (DO) 006, which is the FIA Central team.

If the customer opts to fill out a paper application, use the new ESAP application. Customers may also fill out the 9701 application. Using a paper application means that the case manager must process the application in the LDSS. If a customer applies for FSP and another FIA benefit program through *my*DHR, the application will be routed to the local department for handling.

Case managers should note that the ESAP application signature page is located at the end of the Rights and Responsibilities. Customers must sign the application.

For existing FSP customers, the local departments are responsible for converting

customers to ESAP at the next redetermination. The same CARES procedures should be used for this. ESAP cases are maintained in the LDSS.

ESAP

- 1. Reduced verification requirements for customers. Case managers are responsible for obtaining verifications through computer matches and system clearances. The customer may verify required information that is questionable.
 - ESAP-eligible customers are not required to verify unearned income, household size, residency, identity, and shelter expenses, unless questionable.
 - Case managers should use computer matches to verify information. Case managers should use systems such as SOLQ, SDX, MABS and the WORK Number to verify income, identity, and social security number.
 - Medical expenses must be verified to allow the customer the medical expense deduction.
 - When medical expenses are not verified, request verification from the customer.
- 2. ESAP customers have an extended certification period of 36 months.
 - An annual contact with ESAP households is required. The FIA Central team will send out the 12 and 24 month contacts. The contact form must be returned to the Central unit.
 - Extending the certification period requires a CARES workaround described in the CARES Procedures section of this action transmittal.
- 3. After the initial interview, ESAP customers are not required to be interviewed again.
 - Once the customer has an initial interview (whenever possible, this should be a telephone interview), there is no requirement for an interview at redetermination or at the 12 or 24 month contact, unless the ESAP FSP case is being denied.
 - No ESAP case can be denied without an attempt to schedule an interview with the customer.
- 4. If an ESAP customer requests a fair hearing, the hearing can be completed by telephone.
 - The customer does not have to appear in person for the hearing.

Case managers must complete and mail approval notices to ESAP customers. The application approval notice and redetermination notice are the only ESAP notices. Existing CARES notices will be issued, if there is a denial, reduction in benefits or case closing.

CARES PROCEDURES

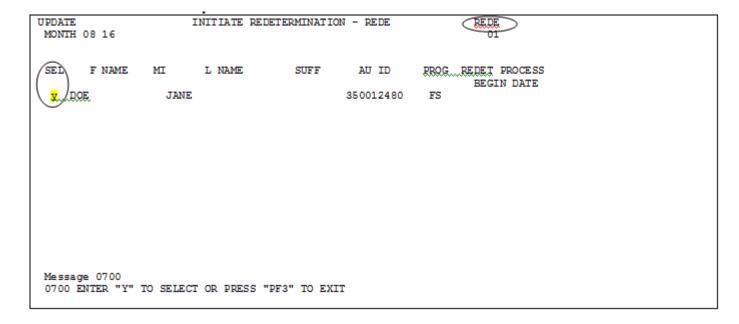
Case managers must code the Special Circumstances field on the **CARES ADDR** screen with an **'ES'** for the Elderly Simplified Application Project. At this time that is the only designation in CARES that the case is an ESAP.

After an approved ESAP case is finalized, case managers should immediately extend the certification period to 36 months or three years and suppress all CARES notices. For cases that have an initial six-month certification period, the extension is done in CARES by initializing a Redet, completing the Redet, then completing an additional **four Redets**. The five Redets add 30 months to the certification period to create the 36-month certification.

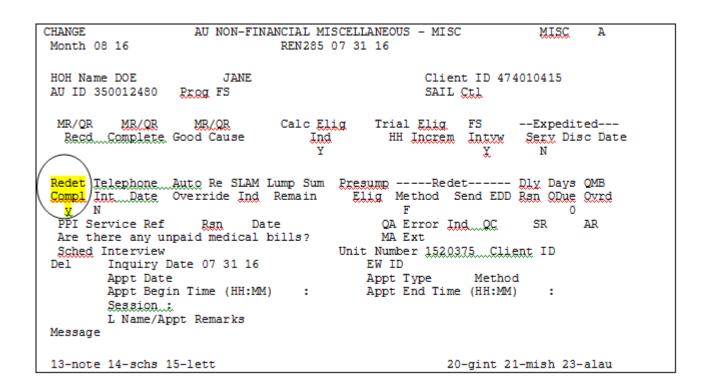
For cases that have an initial 12-month certification period, such as FSP cases where the client is an SSI recipient, **only two additional Redets** are needed, each adding a 12-month, or one-year extension.

A. For cases where the <u>initial certification</u> period starts at 6 months, follow these steps to create the 36-month extension:

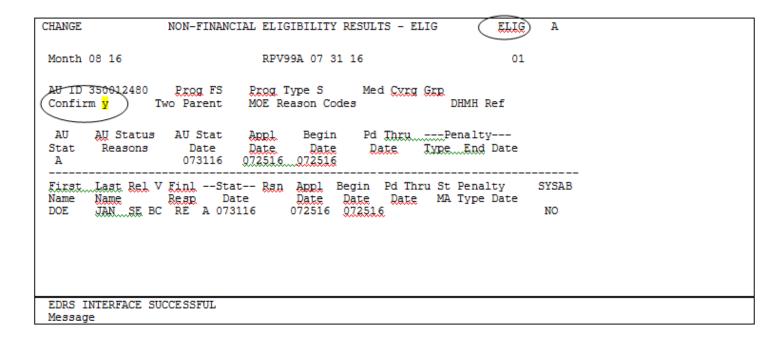
- 1. After finalizing the case, immediately initiate a Redet by selecting option "N" (Initiate Redet) from the AMEN screen.
- 2. On the REDE (Initiate Redetermination) screen, type 'Y' to the left of the AU information and press Enter.



- 3. From the **AMEN** screen, select **option 'R', 'Interim/Hist Change'**, to complete the Redet.
- 4. Fast path to the MISC screen and enter a 'Y' in the 'Redet Compl' field, then press Enter.



5. On the **ELIG screen** enter 'Y' in the 'Confirm' field, then press **Enter**.



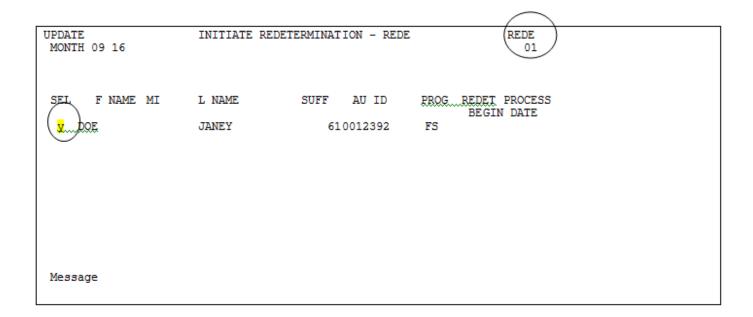
6. On the **FSFI** screen enter 'Y' in the 'Bnft Confirm' field and 'Y' in 'Notice Override' field, then press Enter. The 'Redet End Date' will now show an additional six months. The 'Redet Begin Date' will show the ongoing month as the redet is being done in the ongoing month.

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FOOD STAMP FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY - FSFI
CHANGE
                                                                       FSFI
                             REN285 07 31 16
Month 08 16
AU ID 350012480 Prog FS
                             Prog Type S...HH Size 01
                                     Child Support Deductn .00 Uncapped
            Cat Elig F
                                     Shelter Cost
                                                     1000.00 Shelter Y
  Asset Limit
                           3250.00 Shelter Deductn
                                                               .00
                             .00 Medical Deductn
   Total Assets
                                                                   .00 TFS N
Income Test
                                     Dep Care Deductn
  Gross Income Standard .00 Adjusted Net Income
Gross Earned Income .00 Net Income Standard
Earned Income Deductn .00 30% Adj Net Income
                                                                  .00 CAP N
                                                                  .00
                               .00 30% Adj Net Income
.00 Thrifty Food Plan
                                                                    .00
                                                               194.00
  Net Earned Income
   Gross Unearned Income
                                .00 Grant Amount
                                                               194.00
  Cash Benefit Amount
                               .00 Recoupment Amount
.00 Benefit Amount
                                                                   .00
                          .00 Benefit Amount
157.00 Previous Benefit
   IV-D Passthru Amount
                                                                194.00
  Standard Deductn
                                                               194.00
Buft Eff Date 073116 Buft Confirm v Jeasons 237
                                                                      Budgeting Method P
                                               Notice Override y
Type 004 Waive Advr Act Period
                                                                       Simplified Rpt N
Redet Begin Notice Date 08 16 Redet End Date 06 17
                                                       MR Stat W MR Class 7 Strat Y
Message
```

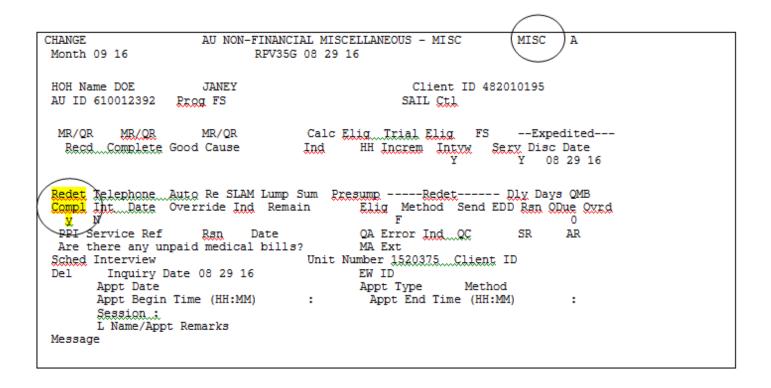
7. **Repeat actions #3 to #6 four** more times until the Redet End Date value indicates a 36-month certification. After the **fifth and final 'Interim/Hist Change'** process, the FSFI screen will show the 36-month, 3-year, cert period.

```
CHANCE
                   FOOD STAMP FINANCIAL FLICIBILITY - ESFI
                                                                         FSFI
Month 08 16
                              REN285 07 31 16
AU ID 350012480 Prog FS
                              Prog Type S. HH Size 01
                                      Cat Elig F
  Asset Limit
                             3250.00 Shelter Deductn
                                                                1000.00 Shelter Y
                              .00 Medical Deductn
                                                                  .00
   Total Assets
                                                                      .00 TFS N
 Income Test
                                       Dep Care Deductn
   Gross Income Standard .00 Adjusted Net Income
Gross Earned Income .00 Net Income Standard
                                                                     .00 CAP N
                                                                    .00
                                 .00 30% Adj Net Income
.00 Thrifty Food Plan
   Earned Income Deductn
                                                                      .00
                                                                 194.00
   Net Earned Income
                                 .00 Grant Amount
   Gross Unearned Income
   Cash Benefit Amount
                           .00 Recoupment Amount
.00 Benefit Amount
157.00 Previous Benefit
                                                                      0.0
   IV-D Passthru Amount
                                                                  194.00
                                                                  194.00
   Standard Deductn
 Bnft Eff Date <u>973116 Bnft</u> Confirm y Reasons 237
                                                                 Budgeting Method P
Notice Type 004 Waive Adv. Act Period Notice Override V Simplified Rpt N
Redet Begin Date 08 16 Redet End Date 06 19 MR Stat N MR Class 7 Strat Y
```

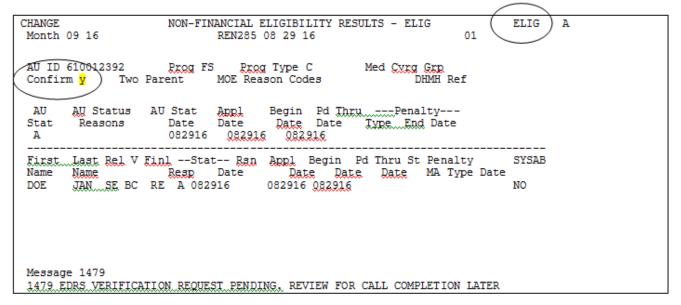
- B. For cases where the initial certification period starts at 12 months, as is for FSP/SSI customers, follow these steps to create the 36-month extension:
 - 1. After finalizing the case, immediately initiate a Redet by **selecting option "N" (Initiate Redet) from the AMEN screen**.
 - 2. In the REDE (Initiate Redetermination) screen, type 'Y' to the left of the AU information and press Enter.



- From the AMEN screen, select option 'R', 'Interim/Hist Change', to complete the Redet.
- 4. Fast path to the MISC screen and enter a 'Y' in the 'Redet Compl' field, then press Enter.



5. In the **ELIG** screen enter **'Y'** in the 'Confirm' field, then press **Enter**.



6. On the FSFI screen enter 'Y' in the 'Bnft Confirm' field and 'Y' in 'Notice Override' field, then press Enter. The 'Redet End Date' will now show an additional 12 months. Note, the 'Redet Begin Date' will show the ongoing month as the redet is being done in the ongoing month.

```
INOUIRY
                         FOOD STAMP FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY - FSFI
                                                                                          FSFI
Month 09 16
                                  RPV35G 08 29 16
AU ID 610012392 Prog FS
                                  Prog Type C._HH Size 01
                                            Child Support Deductn
                Cat Elig C
                                                                                 .00
                                                                        .00 Uncapped
                                         Shelter Cost
                                 3250.00 Shelter Deductn
   Asset Limit
                                                                                 .00 Shelter Y
                                                                       .00
   Total Assets
                                   .00 Medical Deductn
 Income Test
                                             Dep Care Deductn
                                                                  398.00 CAP N
.00
120.00
                                                                                 .00 TFS N
  Gross Income Standard .00 Adjusted Net Income
Gross Earned Income .00 Net Income Standard
Earned Income Deductn .00 30% Adj Net Income
Net Earned Income .00 Thrifty Food Plan
                                                                      194.00
                                 555.00 Grant Amount
   Gross Unearned Income
                                                                                 74.00
  Cash Benefit Amount .00 Recoupment Amount
IV-D Passthru Amount .00 Benefit Amount
Standard Deductn 157.00 Previous Benefit
                                                                          .00
                                                                        74.00
                                                                                 -00
 Bnft Eff Date 082916 Bnft Confirm Y
                                                                                 Budgeting Method P
                                                    Reasons
                          Waive Adyr Act Period Notice Override Y Simplified Rpt N
 Notice Type
 Redet Begin Date 08 16 Redet End Date 07 17 MR Stat N MR Class 7 Strat N
```

7. **Repeat steps #3 to #6 one more time**. After completing the second redet, the FSFI screen will show the 36-month, 3-year, cert period.

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CHANGE
                         FOOD STAMP FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY - FSFI
                                                                                     ESET
                                                                                             Α
Month 09 16
                                REN285 08 29 16
AU ID 610012392 Prog FS
                                Prog Type C HH Size 01
             Cat Elig C
                                         Child Support Deductn
                                                                            .00
                                                            .00 Uncapped
                                       Shelter Cost
                               3250.00 Shelter Deductn
                                                                            .00 Shelter Y
  Asset Limit
                                                                .00 S
.00 T
398.00 CAP N
   Total Assets
                               .00 Medical Deductn
                                                                             .00 TFS N
 Income Test
                                          Dep Care Deductn
  Gross Income Standard .00 Adjusted Net Income
Gross Earned Income .00 Net Income Standard
Earned Income Deductn .00 30% Adj Net Income
Net Earned Income .00 Thrifty Food Plan
                                                                    120.00
                                 .00 Thrifty Food Plan
                                                                    194.00
  Gross Unearned Income 555.00 Grant Amount
Cash Benefit Amount .00 Recoupment Amount
                                                                             74.00
                                                                      .00
                                .00 Benefit Amount
                                                                    74.00
   IV-D Passthru Amount
   Standard Deductn
                                 157.00 Previous Benefit
                                                                             74.00
Bnft Eff Date 082916 Bnft Confirm y Reasons 306
                                                                    Budgeting Method P
Notice Type 004 Waive Advr Act Period Notice Override y Simplified Rpt N
Redet Begin Date 09 16 (Redet End Date 07 19) MR Stat N MR Class
Message
```

Attachments: ESAP Tool Kit, ESAP Application

INQUIRIES

For policy-related questions, please contact fia.policy@maryland.gov. For CARES-related questions, please contact Maryann Maher at 410-238-1363 or maryland.gov.

cc: DHR Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
Office of Administrative Hearings
Office of the Inspector General

DHR Help Desk